

fjlicm xetl^pfc p, OT* dvdcreeos 6v ir68a T&Ssi,
 EV T" dnrtipcp okcp Kal fjOsai AsuyocXIoiaiv . . .
 In the winter weather when No-bones gnaws
 his feet
 By the fireless hearth within his grisly lair . .

This last reference to the winter-diet of the polyp, supposed to live then like a bear on his own paws, is playfully fantastic. But how vivid are all these descriptions (only the more so for their air of only being admitted strictly on business, not for pleasure or mere ornament)! How exact is the picture of the opening fig-leaf, with its eager look of clutching like an opening claw at the air and warmth of spring! Hesiod is no St. Francis; and yet in his quiet nicknames for the wild creatures that seek their livelihood beside him through sun and storm—'the House-carrier', 'No-bones', 'No-hair'⁵ (the snake), 'the Wise One' (the ant), 'the Forest-sleepers' (wild animals)—there is a reticent touch of *camaraderie* quite different from the conscious tenderness of a Virgil or a Burns. Virgil lays a cuckoo's egg of pantheistic speculation in his rookery; Burns, like Langland, fastens a moral, though a charming one, upon his mouse. They are not necessarily the worse for it; but they become less simple. Langland himself, though his hero is a ploughman, reminds us rather of a country lad migrated to a town. He has indeed seen for himself, birds'-nesting perhaps, how the magpie builds where the thorns grow thickest; but most of his 'wild worms in

woods' and
'fowl of many colours' are as generalised as
embroideries
on a tapestry. His interest in the courtship of
peacocks
suggests to us, not field and coppice, but
the gardens of
the great; and to him, as we have seen, a
sermon on
continence. Crabbe, again, has at times
something of the
Greek's directness; but he is wordier and he
indulges that
botanical preference of his for the weeds in
a landscape.